

# Maranatha Christian School

Queenlaines Farm, Sevenhampton, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN6 7SQ

**Inspection dates** 23–25 October 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Pupils' achievement	Good	2
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Quality of curriculum	Good	2
Pupils' welfare, health and safety	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2

## Summary of key findings

### This school is good because

- All pupils are happy, enjoy school very much and achieve well in all subjects, including English, mathematics and science.
- Teaching and the curriculum are of good quality. Work is highly individualised and is mostly well matched to pupils' capabilities.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are well-rounded individuals who manage their own learning exceptionally well. Pupils are enthusiastic, have a strong work ethic and a thirst for learning. They demonstrate high levels of independence when learning.
- Pupils' spiritual development is promoted outstandingly well. Christian beliefs and values permeate all aspects of school life.
- The headteacher and trustees provide good leadership and the school is improving. For example, welfare, health and safety procedures are much better than at the time of the last inspection. Leaders are good at improving teaching and learning through focused professional development.

### It is not yet outstanding because

- Pupils aged between five and ten years are not writing at length. The technical writing skills they learn in the mornings are not used and applied sufficiently well during afternoon work.
- Senior leaders lack formal procedures for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching. Staff are not set formal targets when appraised.
- The planning for outdoor learning, for three to five year olds, is not comprehensive enough. In particular, children's creative, aesthetic and imaginative skills are not as well promoted in the outdoor activities as they are inside.
- Occasionally, work is not challenging enough for pupils.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

## Information about this inspection

- The school was given a day's notice of the inspection.
- Eleven lessons were observed, taught by seven teachers (known as supervisors) and supported by a number of additional staff (monitors). The inspector observed teaching over two days. Teaching, learning and the curriculum provided in all year groups were evaluated. Half a day was spent looking at documentation, checking safeguarding arrangements, and meeting staff and pupils. A range of documents were read, including school policies; pupil performance data and samples of work were evaluated.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, a group of pupils and other staff who held positions of responsibility in school.
- The inspector analysed 22 parental responses to Ofsted's on-line questionnaire (Parent View). Twelve staff questionnaire responses were evaluated. Pupils did not complete an Ofsted survey seeking their views of the school. Their views were sought informally and through a structured discussion with a representative group of pupils.

## Inspection team

David Rzeznik, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Maranatha Christian School opened in 1999. It is located in Sevenhampton, near Swindon. It is registered to admit 90 boys and girls aged between three and 19 years. Most pupils are White British.
- There are 62 pupils on roll, aged three to 18 years. No pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Nine pre-school children (three to four-year-olds) attend part time.
- The education provided is based on 'Biblical foundations and Christian principles'. The school is organised into five learning centres. Pupils learn in the morning using Accelerated Christian Education (ACE) materials which are highly individualised. The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school's last full inspection was in December 2010. A progress monitoring inspection was conducted in May 2011, to check the school's progress in implementing its action plan for ensuring that all welfare, health and safety regulations were met.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, assessment and the curriculum so that pupils make outstanding progress by:
  - ensuring outdoor free-play activities for three- to five-year-olds develop children's creative, aesthetic and imaginative skills more effectively
  - further improving the planning of outdoor play activities to ensure that learning objectives are explicit and improve the range of resources to ensure all areas of learning are promoted
  - ensuring that assessment procedures for children aged under five follow the most recent national guidance and that first-hand evidence to track children's attainment and progress is comprehensive, always dated and is matched to national expectations
  - ensuring that pupils aged between five and ten years write at length, and in a range of different forms, to further develop their creativity; and that pupils use and apply their grammar, punctuation, spelling and handwriting skills and knowledge when writing, particularly in afternoon activities
  - ensuring that all work is challenging so that pupils' learning is extended.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
  - developing and implementing formal procedures to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching
  - setting targets for staff during appraisals to further improve their performance.

## Inspection judgements

### Pupils' achievement

**Good**

Pupils' achievement is good. This is due to the good teaching and pupils' keenness to learn. All pupils are making good progress in all of the subjects taught. Pupils start pre-school with basic skills that are typical for their age and attain above average standards in most subjects by the time they leave school. Work scrutiny shows that pupils do a good volume of work during morning sessions and that their reading, writing and mathematical skills are developing well from an early age. Older pupils are confident when calculating and using equations and algebra, and tackle tricky geometry problems effectively. Pupils' reading skills are strong. They read with fluency and expression and have good comprehension skills. Speaking and listening skills are very well developed, and pupils are very articulate and confident when speaking aloud. This level of performance does not come about by accident. Staff provide plenty of opportunities, particularly during afternoon sessions, for pupils to present ideas, enter into discussion and express their views, and to read interesting and challenging texts, all of which promote effective learning.

Pupils are learning well in other subjects too, because supervisors and other adults teach concepts securely and provide the necessary individual support to enable individuals to make good gains in their learning. Pupils' computer skills are good and they use their technological skills and knowledge well in the classroom, for example, presenting information in effective ways in some science and geography lessons observed.

The youngest children's communication, literacy, numeracy and physical skills are developing at a good rate. This is because adults are providing plenty of worthwhile opportunities to practise and consolidate these skills when doing ACE work and in other activities. Children enjoy learning and are interested in the good range of learning activities provided. Learning outdoors mainly concentrates on developing pupils' social and physical skills, and there are too few opportunities for children to further develop aesthetic, creative and literacy skills in daily free play time.

### Pupils' behaviour and personal development

**Outstanding**

Pupils' behaviour and personal development are outstanding. They have excellent attitudes towards learning, are very enthusiastic and apply themselves to tasks extremely well. Pupils are self-confident, have high self-esteem, are very good independent learners and have a strong work ethic. These are key ingredients in pupils' success. Pupils are happy and enjoy school life, as demonstrated by their regular attendance. Relationships between adults and pupils and between the pupils themselves are first rate. The atmosphere in the school is exceptionally friendly, welcoming and supportive, and its ethos shines through in all aspects of school life. Pupils reported that bullying in any form does not occur and that they are free from harassment. They feel safe and secure at all times. Pupils know right from wrong and follow the school's code of conduct closely. Incidents of misbehaviour are rare and when they do occur are dealt with promptly and effectively.

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils have an excellent understanding of cultural and religious diversity, and are respectful and tolerant of those from different backgrounds. They are very well prepared for life in a multicultural global society. For example, individuals have travelled, with staff, to Ghana, South Africa and India to teach children in schools and orphanages and to help improve living conditions for those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils take responsibility for cleaning parts of the school and older pupils look after younger ones. They do these jobs very well. Pupils have raised money for good causes, for example, the local night shelter for the homeless. They have a good understanding of democratic values, public and civic responsibilities and British institutions. Spiritual life is at the heart of the school's work. It is highly effective in encouraging pupils to live by biblical principles, a key aim of

the school. The school takes suitable steps to ensure that pupils are presented with balanced viewpoints.

### Quality of teaching

**Good**

Teaching is good. It enables all pupils to make good progress in lessons and over time. Supervisors and monitors are appropriately experienced and are effectively trained to use the ACE system. They have good subject knowledge and teach concepts securely. Teachers have suitably high expectations and mostly pitch work at the right level for pupils of differing ability. Occasionally, work lacks challenge and this means that pupils consolidate their learning rather than having it extended. During morning sessions, pupils work at their own pace and organise their own sequence of learning. They set goals and mark their own work effectively. Regular checks on learning, by adults and the pupils themselves, ensure that pupils know what has been achieved and what must be improved. All adults provide good quality individual tuition in a timely fashion. Support and guidance are well targeted and intervention is matched to each individual's specific needs. As a result, learning moves on at a good pace and any gaps in learning are quickly rectified. From the youngest age, pupils are encouraged to work independently and to take responsibility for their learning and behaviour. They do this exceptionally well. Pupils work hard and give of their best at all times.

Literacy and mathematical skills are taught well. This said, pupils aged between five and ten years are not writing at length often enough to further develop their creativity. Technical writing skills that are acquired in morning ACE activities are not always used and applied when writing in afternoon activities. Learning outdoors for the youngest children is not of the same good quality as the learning indoors.

During the afternoons, pupils learn a variety of subjects in a range of different ways. Worthwhile topics are studied that motivate pupils to think and learn. For example, in an apologetics lesson older pupils looked at some of the controversial issues that Christians have to come to terms with in their faith. Study of the Holocaust, through the eyes of children, helped pupils gain an understanding of conflict, oppression and discrimination and its impact. Plenty of opportunities for pupils to work in groups, pairs and teams are provided and good quality resources support learning effectively.

Assessment procedures are good. Staff assess pupils' learning and progress regularly and accurately, and ensure that pupils know how well they have achieved and what must be improved. Staff who teach the under-fives are regularly monitoring children's attainment and progress, but are not using the most recent national guidance to do so. Adults collect first-hand evidence to support any judgements made, but it is not comprehensive and is not always dated or properly matched to national expectations.

### Quality of curriculum

**Good**

The curriculum is good. It is broad and balanced and covers all of the required areas of learning. The activities provided ensure that all pupils make good gains in their learning, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage (Pre-school and ABC class). The school uses the highly structured and individualised ACE programme, which covers mathematics, English, word building (vocabulary and spelling), science and social studies. In the mornings, pupils work systematically through ACE work-book tasks. Activities are closely matched to each individual's ability. Pupils work diligently in their offices, setting their own goals and marking their own work to check how well they are doing. They get through a good volume of work and supervisors and monitors support learning well.

Learning in the mornings for the youngest children rightly focuses on reading, writing and mathematics. Children have 15 minutes free play outdoors each day. The quality of activities and

the resources used for outdoor learning are not as good as those indoors. Planning for outdoor learning lacks clarity, particularly regarding what must be achieved. Learning outdoors overly focuses on promoting children's physical development, with too few opportunities for creative and imaginative play.

In the afternoons, pupils are grouped by age and are taught a broad range of additional subjects, including history, geography, music, art, information and communication technology (ICT) and physical education, including sports and swimming. Spanish is taught to older pupils using an on-line computer program. The style of learning is different during the afternoons, with pupils working in groups and on practical and discussion-based activities, which effectively enhance pupils' personal, social and communication skills.

Computers are used very effectively to support learning in all years; for example, a group of older pupils presented their views about China's one-child policy using slide presentations and computer graphics to very good effect. As at the time of the last inspection, the school provides an excellent framework for pupils' personal, social and health education. Religious education is very successful in developing a set of Christian values and beliefs which inform individuals' perspective on life. The 'Looking Beyond' careers programme appropriately prepares pupils for their next stage of life.

A good range of enrichment activities is provided, including trips to places of interest and organised sporting events and fixtures with other schools. Pupils say that they very much enjoy the annual Student Convention where pupils from ACE schools across the country compete in academic, artistic, dramatic, musical and sporting events. Some individuals have attended an International Convention in the United States of America, and speak highly of the event and its impact on their lives.

### **Pupils' welfare, health and safety**

**Good**

Provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good. All of the regulations are met. Safeguarding procedures are much improved from at the time of the last inspection. All staff, including the designated person for child protection, are suitably trained to fulfil their child protection responsibilities. All of the required recruitment and vetting checks are carried out on staff, trustees, volunteers and others to confirm their suitability to work with children. The single central register contains all of the necessary information. However, some minor amendments were made to its contents during the inspection to ensure full compliance with requirements.

The school has all of the required health and safety policies and they are effectively implemented. Arrangements to promote outstanding behaviour and eliminate bullying are highly effective. Consequently, pupils are free from intimidation and learn in a non-disruptive, calm environment.

Pupils are well cared for and are properly supervised at all times. Risk assessment for the premises and educational activities off-site are of good quality and ensure pupils are protected from harm. First aid procedures are clear and there are sufficient first aiders on site to deal with injuries and emergencies. Attendance admission registers are maintained satisfactorily and in line with requirements. Fire safety procedures are adequate. All fire fighting equipment is subject to annual inspection to ensure it is fully operational.

The school monitors lunches and snacks to ensure they comply with good nutrition standards. Parents are contacted if they do not. The curriculum encourages all pupils to adopt a healthy lifestyle and to participate in sports training, swimming, dance, athletics and football to keep fit.

### **Leadership and management**

**Good**

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and trustees have ensured that the school's vision to provide an education based on biblical principles is met in full. They have ensured that professional development has improved teaching and learning. The leadership of teaching,

learning and the curriculum is effective and all regulatory requirements are met. In December 2010, safeguarding arrangements were inadequate. An effective action plan was implemented to bring about improvement, resulting in good child protection procedures being in place when a monitoring inspection was conducted in May 2011.

Leaders have ensured that pupils are happy, enjoy school and achieve well. Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of education or employment. Pupils say 'the headteacher loves God and loves us', reflecting the esteem in which he is held. Parents and staff hold the school in high regard. They think that the school is well led and managed. Monitoring and evaluation of the school's work are carried out mainly through informal rather than formal, systematic methods. Nevertheless, the headteacher has a very clear view of the school's main strengths and its relative weaknesses. Assessment information about pupils' academic achievements, the curriculum and a good knowledge of parent and staff views enables a fair and accurate self-evaluation to be produced. An appraisal system exists and staff determine their personal and professional needs at annual reviews of their performance. Staff training and professional development is based on the outcome of appraisals. However, formal targets are not set to further improve individuals' performance.

The premises and accommodation are of good quality. They ensure pupils are kept safe and secure and enable effective learning. The school provides, or makes available, all of the required information to parents and others. The complaints procedure meets regulatory requirements.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of education and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of education that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of education it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and/or the quality of education has serious weaknesses.



## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	126536
<b>Inspection number</b>	422713
<b>DfE registration number</b>	866/6001

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

<b>Type of school</b>	Christian
<b>School status</b>	Independent School
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–19 years
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	62
<b>Number of part time pupils</b>	9
<b>Proprietor</b>	New Maranatha Christian School Trust
<b>Chair</b>	John Cullis
<b>Headteacher</b>	Paul Medlock
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	December 2010
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£306–£4,158
<b>Telephone number</b>	01793 762075
<b>Fax number</b>	Not applicable
<b>Email address</b>	reception@maranathaschool.org

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